

**U.S. Department of Justice**  
*United States Attorney*  
*Western District of New York*

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*Buffalo, New York 14202*

# **PRESS RELEASE**

August 17, 2005

**RE: UNITED STATES v. KURT ST. LOUIS**

Acting United States Attorney Kathleen M. Mehlretter announced today that Kurt St. Louis, age 26, of 294 Fox Hunt Drive, Lockport, New York 14094, entered a plea of guilty to a one count indictment charging him with maliciously damaging and destroying, by means of fire, a building which is used in interstate and foreign commerce and in an activity affecting interstate and foreign commerce. Mr. St. Louis further admitted that as a direct and proximate result of such criminal action, personal injury resulted to a person, including a public safety officer, in the performance of his duties, all in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 844(i). This charge is punishable by a maximum period of 40 years incarceration, a \$250,000 fine, or both. The charge also carries a mandatory minimum period of seven (7) years incarceration. The defendant entered this plea of guilty before the Hon. Richard J. Arcara, Chief Judge, Western District of New York. Judge Arcara set sentencing for December 7, 2005 at 12:30 p.m.

Assistant United States Attorney Richard P. Maigret, the assistant in charge of the prosecution, stated that the defendant, by the terms of his plea agreement, admitted to maliciously damaging and destroying, by means of fire, the building and business known as Kitchen World, located at 6348 Robinson Road in the Town of Lockport, New York, on the morning of November 27, 2004. Three (3) firefighters, Mr. Carl Sinclair, the assistant chief of the South Lockport Fire Department, Mr. Lawrence C. Sparks, IV of the Rapids Fire Department and Mr. Robert Fritton, Jr. of the Gasport Chemical Hose Company, were injured in the performance of their duties while fighting this fire. None of the injuries were life threatening and all received treatment from a hospital and were released.

The structure was a total loss, as a result of the fire which the defendant set, is currently estimated to be at least \$2,737,902.50 and includes an estimated \$650,000.00 for lost inventory and lost business that was not insured.

This case was referred to the United States Attorney's Office for the Western District of New York for federal prosecution by the Niagara County District Attorney's Office, as under federal law, the penalties for an arson of this type are greater than those afforded by New York State law.

The investigation involving the arson was conducted by the Niagara County Fire Coordinator's Office and assisted by members of the Niagara County Sheriff's Department, and Special Agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives from the Buffalo Field Office.

The defendant has remained in custody since his arrest on November 27, 2004.